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CITY OF CHICAGO WINS AWARD FOR TECH INNOVATION

City among 50 International Recipients of Smart 50 Award for Transformative Smart Cities Projects

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Innovation and Technology today announced Chicago won a Smart 50 Award from Smart Cities Connect for its innovative Array of Things program, the first of its kind to be implemented on a city-wide scale. Smart 50 Awards honor the 50 most innovative and influential smart cities projects each year from around the globe.

“It’s an honor for Chicago to receive a Smart 50 Award and be recognized on a global level as a leader in the field of tech innovation,” Mayor Emanuel said. “The Array of Things program is another example of the City’s commitment to developing and implementing new technology that will help fuel opportunity and engagement to help Chicago become a more transparent, innovative, effective and efficient city.”

Array of Things (AoT) is a network of interactive, modular sensor boxes that measure real-time data on the city’s environment, infrastructure and activity for research and public use. The goal is to make city services more efficient and effective for Chicagoans by anticipating and proactively addressing challenges such as urban flooding and traffic safety.

AoT will serve as a “fitness tracker” for the city, measuring factors that impact livability in Chicago such as climate, air quality and noise to help detect heavy vehicle traffic, identify standing water in real time to prevent property damage and illness and observe which areas of the city are heavily populated by pedestrians at different times of day to suggest safe and efficient routes for walking to improve pedestrian safety.

“Through data sharing, the deployment of connected technologies, and the use of analytics and machine learning, governments can better understand the performance of its infrastructure and the health and safety of its neighborhoods,” Department of Innovation and Technology Commissioner and CIO Danielle DuMerer said. “Chicago has been a leader in the deployment of these technologies and I look forward to leveraging this platform to

achieve better outcomes and to work across sectors and with communities to solve challenges.”

Data is posted on the city’s data portal for the public to see and use. AoT has been designed to minimize any potential collection of data about individuals with privacy protection built into the design of the sensors and into the operating policies. Residents, researchers, urban planners, developers, government leaders and community groups can engage with collected data to make Chicago a truly smart city with enhanced urban planning, policy and design.

Members of the Smart Cities Connect global city leader community selected Chicago’s Array of Things program for this award because it is a leading example of how new technology is transforming efforts for urban growth and smart city planning. AoT sets itself apart from other smart city efforts by being truly multi-dimensional: in addition to environmental sensor data collection, the initiative is accompanied by educational programming, community outreach and R&D opportunities for academics, startups and other businesses and organizations.

The Array of Things program is managed by University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory, along with the City, and funded by a National Science Foundation grant. For more information, visit <https://arrayofthings.github.io/>.

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